

CHAPTER 8 – GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

8.1 PLAN GOALS

The goals of the Vinton Area Corridors Plan are based upon the following areas of focus: aesthetics and community character, land use, transportation, and community involvement and participation. The four main goals are:

1. **Improve the visual appearance of the corridors while protecting the community's character and identity;**
2. **Encourage quality development and redevelopment along the study corridors and the revitalization of Downtown Vinton;**
3. **Increase the capacity and safety of transportation facilities along the corridors; and**
4. **Provide a variety of opportunities for the community to actively participate and be involved in the implementation of this Plan and in the development of future planning studies.**

These goals may be achieved by implementing the plan recommendations found in this chapter, which include amending the Future Land Use Maps for the Town of Vinton and Roanoke County, creating new zoning overlay districts, generating Design Guidelines for the study corridors, modifying the Commercial Corridor Matching Grant and the Downtown Façade Programs, planning for gateway and streetscape improvements and supporting alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles and buses. The following recommendations are intended to provide long-term direction for planners, engineers, elected and appointed officials, property owners, developers, business owners, citizens and other stakeholders through the subsequent adoption of plans, ordinances and design guidelines.

8.2 FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most significant components included in the recommendations for the Plan are proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Maps included in the Roanoke County and Town of Vinton Comprehensive Plans. The future land use designations along the study corridors were last modified during the Town of Vinton and Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan rewrites in 2004 and 2005, respectively. Since these revisions, many changes have occurred along the study corridors, including new commercial development and redevelopment, successful obtainment of a CDBG Planning Grant for Downtown Revitalization, state funding to conduct a feasibility study for the vacant Vinton Ford Motors properties located at the intersection of Washington Avenue and South Pollard Street, and numerous planned and implemented infrastructure improvements.

As Vinton continues to grow and land is consumed, alternative measures for mitigating growth will present increased demands for infill development within the Town of Vinton and expansion into eastern Roanoke County where vacant land is available. The current Future Land Use Maps for the Town of Vinton and Roanoke County should be updated to account for the new development, proposed redevelopment, and anticipated improvement to the transportation network.

Three alternative future land use map scenarios were presented to the public for comment at the community meeting held in June 2009. The alternative scenarios ranged from minor modifications to more aggressive growth modifications. Following the community meeting, county and town staff evaluated the public comments and presented them at Planning Commission work sessions. As a result of the work sessions, a fourth alternative scenario was drafted for presentation at the public hearing held in December 2009.

The following sections describe the proposed future land use amendments in more detail. All of the future land use scenario maps can be found in Appendix A.

8.2.1 Future Land Use Scenario 1

The first Future Land Use Scenario includes basic changes to the current future land use designations along the study

corridors. The modifications complement the existing land uses and current zoning designations of the land along the study corridors. Some adjustments include properties along Glade Creek that are located in the floodplain and were purchased by the Town of Vinton. The changes also incorporate the correction of mapping errors. A map of Future Land Use Scenario 1 can be found in Appendix A.

The proposed modifications in Scenario 1 include the following:

- Amending the southern portion of the Old William Byrd High School parcel owned by the Roanoke County School Board, zoned R-2 Residential, and located on Gus Nicks Boulevard from High-Density Residential to Community Facilities;
- Changing the northern portion of the parcel on Gus Nick Boulevard and adjacent to the Norfolk-Southern Railroad from High-Density Residential to General Commercial in its entirety;
- Expanding the Conservation designation along Tinker Avenue to nine small parcels currently identified as Parks and Recreation due to the Town of Vinton's acquisition of these parcels located within the floodplain along Glade Creek;
- Changing the Conservation/Open Space designation of five parcels located between 525 Tinker Avenue to the corner of 6th Street and Tinker Avenue to Low-Density Residential;
- Convert the 200 block south of West Virginia Avenue from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Changing the designation of parcels in the Edgefield - Section 2, Deer Ridge, and Greenway Landing residential subdivisions from Development to Neighborhood Conservation;
- Changing the designations of Goode Park and an adjacent parcel with an established religious assembly use from Transition to Neighborhood Conservation;
- Updating the designation of a parcel on the south of Hardy Road near the eastern limits of the Town of Vinton from Residential Business to Community Facilities;

- Changing the designation of a parcel on Hardy Road across from Deer Ridge which is owned by the Town of Vinton from Residential Business (Town of Vinton) to Community Facilities; and
- Converting the common area and parcels in Phase II of the Feather Garden development from Transition to Neighborhood Conservation.

To highlight the major amendments in Scenario 1, significant reductions are proposed in the amount of land designated as Development and High-Density Residential. The drop in land designated as Development is based on the amount of new residential development occurring in Roanoke County as of 1998, leading to significant increases in the Neighborhood Conservation designation. The proposed modifications to Goode Park, an adjacent parcel with an established religious assembly use, and amendments to the Feather Garden development led to a decrease in the amount of land designated Transition in Roanoke County. The proposed changes to a portion of the Old William Byrd High School parcel led to increases in the Town of Vinton's Community Facilities designation.

Future Land Use	Jurisdiction	Acreage	Percentage
Core	Roanoke County	47.91	7.45%
Development	Roanoke County	15.36	2.39%
Neighborhood Conservation	Roanoke County	112.29	17.46%
Transition	Roanoke County	138.43	21.52%
Community Facilities	Town of Vinton	42.45	6.60%
Conservation/Open Space	Town of Vinton	19.06	2.96%
General Commercial	Town of Vinton	43.72	6.80%
High-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	1.99	0.31%
Heavy Industrial	Town of Vinton	35.64	5.54%
Low-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	12.82	1.99%
Medium-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	14.63	2.27%
Park and Recreation	Town of Vinton	14.16	2.20%
Residential Business	Town of Vinton	58.71	9.13%
Retail Service Commercial	Town of Vinton	85.98	13.37%
Total		643.14	100.00%

8.2.2 Future Land Use Scenario 2

The second Future Land Use Scenario incorporates the changes proposed in Scenario 1 with minor modifications in the intensity of commercial and retail land uses along the study corridors. A map of Future Land Use Scenario 2 can be found in Appendix A.

In addition to the changes in Scenario 1, the modifications proposed in Future Land Use Scenario 2 include the following:

- Changing the designation of a block of parcels on Walnut Avenue from General Commercial to Retail Service Commercial;
- Converting the designation of two blocks of parcels on the south of West Virginia Avenue and adjacent to 3rd and 2nd Streets, from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Updating a block of parcels on the north side of East Virginia Avenue between Spruce Street, Pine Street and Virginia Avenue that are designated General Business from Medium-Density Residential to Retail Service Commercial;
- Changing the designation of six parcels on the south side of the Bypass and Hardy Road intersection from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Updating numerous parcels designated Residential Business on the north and south sides of Hardy Road from Medium-Density Residential to Residential Business;
- Changing a block of parcels on the south side of Washington Avenue and adjacent to Lindenwood and Maple Drives from Neighborhood Conservation to Transition;

- Changing the designation of numerous parcels on the north side of Hardy Road near the eastern limits of the Town of Vinton from Residential Business and General Commercial to Retail Service Commercial;
- Converting the frontage of parcels on the south side of Hardy Road from Development to Transition;
- Changing five parcels on the north side of Hardy Road and adjacent to Feather Lake Drive from Neighborhood Conservation to Transition.

Due to the conversion of frontage parcels along Hardy Road in Roanoke County, the modifications in Scenario 2 propose a significant reduction in land designated as Development, as well as a similar increase in land designated Transition.

8.2.3 Future Land Use Scenario 3

The third Future Land Use Scenario incorporates the changes found in Scenarios 1 and 2 with major modifications along the study corridors. A map of Future Land Use Scenario 3 can be found in Appendix A.

In addition to the changes in Scenario 1 and 2, the modifications proposed in Future Land Use Scenario 3 include the following:

- Expanding the Retail Service Commercial designation on the majority of the parcels north and south of Walnut Avenue between 5th Street and West Jackson Avenue which are currently designated General Commercial;
- Converting the designation of the block of parcels north of East Virginia Avenue from Medium-Density Residential to General Commercial;
- Changing the two parcels south of Hardy Road between Vinyard Road and Bypass Road designated General Business from the Retail Service Commercial designation to General Commercial;
- Changing three parcels northwest of the intersection of Bypass and Hardy Roads designated General Business from Retail Service Commercial to General Commercial;
- Change the block south of Hardy Road between Clearview Drive to south of Preston Road from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;

Table 8.2.2 Vinton Area Study Corridors - Future Land Use Scenario 2

Future Land Use	Jurisdiction	Acreage	Percentage
Core	Roanoke County	47.90	7.45%
Development	Roanoke County	6.65	1.03%
Neighborhood Conservation	Roanoke County	105.21	16.36%
Transition	Roanoke County	152.78	23.76%
Community Facilities	Town of Vinton	42.45	6.60%
Conservation/Open Space	Town of Vinton	19.06	2.96%
General Commercial	Town of Vinton	40.99	6.37%
High-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	1.99	0.31%
Heavy Industrial	Town of Vinton	35.64	5.54%
Low-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	12.82	1.99%
Medium-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	11.56	1.80%
Park and Recreation	Town of Vinton	14.16	2.20%
Residential Business	Town of Vinton	45.85	7.13%
Retail Service Commercial	Town of Vinton	106.08	16.49%
Total		643.14	100.00%

- Changing the parcels north of Washington Avenue between the Vinton War Memorial and Halliahurst Avenue from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Changing the designation of the parcels south of Washington Avenue between Church Street and South Mitchell Road from Medium-Density Residential, High-Density Residential, or Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Changing a block of eleven parcels south of Washington Avenue along Fairmont Drive and Marshall Avenue from Residential Business and Medium-Density Residential to Retail Service Commercial;
- Changing the designation of a row of parcels between Washington Avenue and Fairmont Drive between Marshall Avenue and Bush Drive from Retail Service Commercial to General Commercial;
- Change the designation of one parcel south of Washington Avenue along Wolf Creek from Core to Conservation;
- Expand the split-designation of one parcel south of Washington Avenue from Development to Core;
- Change the designation of three parcels north of Washington Avenue between William Byrd High School and Stonebridge Circle from Neighborhood Conservation to Transition;
- Convert the designation of numerous parcels north and south of Hardy Road near the eastern limits of Vinton from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Change the designation of parcels along Wolf Creek north and south of Hardy Road from Development to Conservation;
- Expand the Transition designation of parcels north and south of Hardy Road between Deer Ridge Lane and Feather Road; and
- Convert the designation of the parcels in the Vinton Business Center from Transition to Principal Industrial.

Scenario 3 adds the Conservation designation to a few parcels along the study corridors, providing additional protection of areas along Wolf Creek including the greenway. Contrary to this protection, this scenario

proposes to designate parcels within the Vinton Business Center to Principal Industrial. The current future land use map does not designate any land along the study corridors Principal Industrial. In the Town of Vinton, Scenario 3 eliminates the High-Density Residential designation of land along the study corridors.

Future Land Use	Jurisdiction	Acreage	Percentage
Conservation	Roanoke County	2.88	0.45%
Core	Roanoke County	50.82	7.90%
Development	Roanoke County	0.06	0.01%
Neighborhood Conservation	Roanoke County	91.35	14.20%
Principal Industrial	Roanoke County	97.12	15.10%
Transition	Roanoke County	70.32	10.93%
Community Facilities	Town of Vinton	42.45	6.60%
Conservation/Open Space	Town of Vinton	20.96	3.26%
General Commercial	Town of Vinton	57.35	8.92%
Heavy Industrial	Town of Vinton	35.64	5.54%
Low-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	10.78	1.68%
Medium-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	7.31	1.14%
Park and Recreation	Town of Vinton	14.16	2.20%
Residential Business	Town of Vinton	4.15	0.65%
Retail Service Commercial	Town of Vinton	137.80	21.43%
Total		643.14	100.00%

8.2.4 Future Land Use Scenario 4

The fourth Future Land Use Scenario proposes modifications along the study corridors that represent the preferences of both the Vinton and Roanoke County Planning Commissioners. During the late summer and early fall of 2009, staff held work sessions with both Planning Commissions to discuss the current future land use along the study corridors, as well as the amendments proposed in Scenarios 1, 2 and 3. To assist the Commissioners, staff supplemented the work sessions by presenting the results of the community survey, business owner interviews, and comments received from the community meetings. All of this information was incorporated into the modifications proposed in Scenario 4. A map of Future Land Use Scenario 4 can be found in Appendix A.

Of the Future Land Use amendments proposed in Scenarios 1, 2, and 3, the following modifications were supported and recommended by the Planning Commissioners in Scenario 4:

- Amending the southern portion of the Old William Byrd High School parcel owned by the Roanoke County School Board, zoned R-2 Residential, and located on Gus Nicks Boulevard from High-Density Residential to Community Facilities;
- Changing the designation of the northern portion of the parcel on Gus Nick Boulevard and adjacent to the Norfolk-Southern Railroad from High-Density Residential to General Commercial;
- Expanding the Conservation designation along Tinker Avenue to nine small parcels currently identified as Parks and Recreation due to the Town of Vinton's acquisition of these parcels located within the floodplain along Glade Creek;
- Changing the Conservation/Open Space designation of five parcels located between 525 Tinker Avenue to the corner of 6th Street and Tinker Avenue to Low-Density Residential;
- Convert the 200 block south of West Virginia Avenue from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Amend the Retail Service Commercial designation of the parcels in the Lake Drive Plaza Shopping Center to General Commercial;
- Change the block south of Hardy Road between Clearview Drive to south of Preston Road from Residential Business to Retail Service Commercial;
- Changing the designations of Goode Park, and an adjacent parcel with an established religious assembly use from Transition to Neighborhood Conservation;
- Change the designation of one parcel south of Washington Avenue along Wolf Creek from Core to Conservation;
- Expand the split-designation of one parcel south of Washington Avenue from Development to Core;
- Change the designation of parcels along Wolf Creek north and south of Hardy Road from Development to Conservation;
- Expand the Transition designation of frontage parcels north and south of Hardy Road between Deer Ridge Lane and Feather Road; and
- Changing the designation of parcels in the Edgefield - Section 2, Deer Ridge, and Greenway Landing residential subdivisions from Development to Neighborhood Conservation;
- Changing the designation of a parcel on Hardy Road across from Deer Ridge which is owned by the Town of Vinton from Residential Business (Town of Vinton) to Community Facilities; and
- Converting the common area and parcels in Phase II of the Feather Garden development from Transition to Neighborhood Conservation.
- Changing a row of parcels on the south side of Washington Avenue and adjacent to Lindenwood and Maple Drives from Neighborhood Conservation to Transition;

Table 8.2.4 Vinton Area Study Corridors - Future Land Use Scenario 4

Future Land Use	Jurisdiction	Acreage	Percentage
Conservation	Roanoke County	2.88	0.45%
Core	Roanoke County	50.83	7.90%
Development	Roanoke County	0.07	0.01%
Neighborhood Conservation	Roanoke County	92.68	14.41%
Transition	Roanoke County	166.1	25.83%
Community Facilities	Town of Vinton	42.45	6.60%
Conservation/Open Space	Town of Vinton	20.97	3.26%
General Commercial	Town of Vinton	56.91	8.85%
Heavy Industrial	Town of Vinton	35.64	5.54%
Low-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	10.88	1.69%
Medium-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	12.27	1.91%
Heavy-Density Residential	Town of Vinton	1.99	0.31%
Park and Recreation	Town of Vinton	14.16	2.20%
Residential Business	Town of Vinton	52.14	8.11%
Retail Service Commercial	Town of Vinton	83.19	12.93%
Total		643.14	100.00%

8.3 ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

Three zoning overlay districts are recommended along the study corridors that will encourage higher quality development standards for non-residential parcels along the study corridors, as well as improve and preserve the history and character of the study corridors. To adopt these overlays, separate actions must be taken by the governing bodies of each jurisdiction for inclusion into the respective zoning ordinance.

8.3.1 Entrance Corridor Overlay District

The development of an Entrance Corridor Overlay District (ECOD) for the Vinton study corridors will encourage appropriate redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial structures and the compatibility of new development. Design guidelines should be crafted to improve the architectural and visual character of these major corridors and encourage compatibility with surrounding natural landforms, vegetation and environmental resources. The design guidelines for this proposed zoning overlay district will apply to parcels located within the ECOD boundary and should include standards for permitted and prohibited land uses, as well as site development. The site development criteria that may be addressed in this overlay district include site access, vehicular circulation, parking lot design, landscaping and setbacks.

8.3.2 Central Business District

As indicated in the *Town of Vinton's 2004 Economic and Community Development Plan*, the Town has difficulty attracting and retaining viable businesses, which has resulted in scattered vacant buildings and underutilized parcels. With the exception of the downtown area, the Town of Vinton lacks well-defined commercial districts, resulting in intermingled land uses dispersed along the study corridors often poorly separated from residential land uses. The incompatibility of commercial, industrial and residential land uses has caused issues with community identity, aesthetics, continuity in streetscape amenities, open space, bicycle and pedestrian interconnectivity and vehicular access and circulation.

As Downtown revitalization efforts are underway in the Town of Vinton, the boundaries of the CB Central Business District need to be reviewed for compatibility with the boundaries of the Community Development Block Grant. The zoning district regulations need to be reviewed for compatibility for infill development and mixed-use development which should allow for residential units.

8.3.3 Historic District

At the current time, neither the Town of Vinton's nor Roanoke County's zoning ordinances contain regulations for the establishment of Historic Overlay Districts. Creating Historic Overlay Districts would afford property owners the opportunity to obtain historic tax credits and allow the Town and County to use various incentives to improve and preserve the history of Vinton and East

Roanoke County. Housing conditions are deteriorating in many of the neighborhoods in the Town of Vinton. The edges of the neighborhoods lack definition and pedestrian access is poor with little to no connections to local parks and greenways. As identified in the *Vinton Economic and Community Development Plan*, zoning regulations fail to preserve the older housing stock throughout many neighborhoods in the Town of Vinton.

Of the seven Roanoke County listings on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), none are located along our study corridors. The County and Town should work with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to conduct archaeological, architectural and historic surveys that focus on identifying and assessing historic resources in the Vinton area. The Town of Vinton 2004-2024 Comprehensive Plan proposes a Historic District centered on Vinton's downtown and Jefferson Park neighborhood.

8.4 GATEWAY AND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

8.4.1 Gateway Entrances

The gateways into the Town of Vinton fail to provide a clear physical delineation between the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County. Comments received through the community survey indicate that many residents and commuters desire a stronger sense of arrival as they travel along the study corridors. Due to the existing buildout along the study corridors including buildings, parking lots, signs, and screening, it is often difficult to ascertain when you are leaving one jurisdiction and arriving in another. Existing infrastructure such as bridges and railroad overpasses, coupled with natural landscape features such as creeks and open space, distract motorists from the existing entrance signs and landscaping along the gateways into Vinton.

In order to create effective gateways that promote a sense of arrival and signify a distinctive community identity that is attractive and inviting, the Town of Vinton needs to develop a consistent branding theme that can be applied to gateway features, key civic buildings, and other places of interest. The existing gateway entrances signs need to be updated with fresh coats of paint or replaced with larger signs. A gateway entrance sign needs to be constructed along Hardy Road. Landscaping should be

added or redesigned around the gateway entrance signs, in medians, and along both sides of the roadways to provide year round color and texture.

Other improvements such as decorative street lights, hanging baskets, banners, benches, attractive fencing, tree wells, and improved pedestrian amenities should be added to gateways. Alternative intersection realignments and corridor designs should be considered for slowing traffic at the entrances. Specific plans of action regarding the entrances can be found in the 2004 Town of Vinton *Economic and Community Development Plan*. Conceptual renderings regarding gateway entrance improvements are provided in Appendix B of this document.



Image 8.4.1 Landscaping is needed to enhance the gateway entrance into the Town of Vinton along Walnut Avenue.

8.4.2 Wayfinding and Public Signage

One of the strategies outlined in the Town of Vinton's Comprehensive Plan recommends the design and implementation of an informational and directional sign system to places of interest in the Town of Vinton. Wayfinding and public signs located along the study corridors are not serving their purpose effectively. The placement and proximity of the signs in the image below clutter the corridors and obstruct visibility. In 2008, staff from RVARC began conducting an inventory of the existing wayfinding and public signs along the study corridors. For results of their findings and recommendations, see the *Vinton Area Wayfinding and Public Signage Study* found in Appendix B.

8.5 STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the gateway entrance recommendations, streetscape improvements need to be considered throughout the entire study corridor area. The community survey indicated that bicycle lanes, crosswalks and sidewalks were the highest ranking streetscape improvements desired by citizens. As opportunities arise for installation of new traffic signalization, pavement restriping, or the reconstruction of corridors, the following general recommendations should be considered along the study corridors.

8.5.1 Bicycle Recommendations

In 2004, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board adopted the *Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations* providing framework for how the VDOT will accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in the planning, funding, design, construction, operation and maintenance of Virginia's transportation network. This policy significantly improved the availability for a county to use its secondary roads allocation to plan, design, and construct bicycle accommodations.

According to the *Rural Bikeway Plan* prepared by RVARC, "this policy also eliminates the past VDOT policy requiring that a roadway be included in an approved bikeway plan in order for bicycle accommodations to be considered as part of roadway improvements using Federal and State Funding" (Rural Bikeway Plan, 10). In order to effectively utilize the existing and planned transportation network, this policy should be applied to all of the Vinton study corridors. The VDOT *Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations* is provided in Appendix B.



Image 8.5.1 Streets signs in Downtown Vinton discourage bicyclists

The Town of Vinton and Roanoke County should also utilize cost-effective techniques, where applicable and practical, to better accommodate bicyclists. Various techniques and treatments are available that can be coordinated with paving, maintenance, and construction schedules with the individual localities and VDOT. Some of these techniques include:

- Include bicycle accommodation in the planning and design of the Walnut Avenue and Hardy Road Six Year Road Improvement Projects
- Improved signage, such as share the roadway signs
- Striping on right edge of lanes to provide paved shoulder for bicyclists
- Spot improvements
- Changes in roadway design or operation
- Improve secondary bicycle accommodations at appropriate locations (i.e. bicycle racks at the Vinton Public Library and the Vinton Municipal Building)
- Remove signs from Downtown Vinton that discourage bicyclists

As these improvements are made to the physical environment, it is important to ensure that proper measures are taken to condition the behaviors of bicyclists and motorists along the study corridors. At a minimum, bicyclists and motorists should be familiar with all applicable traffic laws and basic bicycle safety. Other recommendations for acclimating bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists can be effectively addressed through education, awareness and advocacy efforts through community stakeholders and program. To help facilitate this understanding, Appendix B includes a copy of the Virginia Bicycling Laws and Bicycling Safety Tips.

In 2005, the *Bikeway Plan for the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization* was approved as an update to the 1997 *Bikeway Plan*. It serves as a strategic guiding document for the implementation of bicycle accommodation within the Roanoke Valley that was collaboratively developed with members from Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke, the City of Salem, the Town of Vinton, Botetourt County and VDOT involved in the advisory committee. Both the Town of Vinton and Roanoke County should ensure that this plan and all subsequent amendments are adopted into their respective Comprehensive Plans.

8.5.2 Crosswalks

While it is often difficult to predict where pedestrian crossings are most prevalent, it is important that pedestrian crossings be provided at concentrated nodes of mixed-use activities along the study corridors. These nodes are indicative of areas where pedestrian crossings are likely to occur, such as apartment complexes, community centers, schools, parks, shopping areas, restaurants, bus stops, and libraries. Traffic control signal timing should be improved at intersections when feasible, particularly those equipped with existing push-buttons.



Image 8.5.2 Crosswalks are needed at the intersection of South Pollard Street and Washington Avenue.

While the study corridors need to be evaluated comprehensively for crosswalk improvements at key intersections, the following intersections were identified in the *Pedestrian Access to Commercial Centers* study completed by the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVAMPO) in July 2006 for consideration to enhance the safety and efficiency of the pedestrian network at key intersections along the study corridors:

- **Hardy Road and Vinyard Road** - this intersection experiences an increased amount of pedestrian traffic due to existing land uses near the intersection. Vinyard Road connects businesses such as the Lancerlot Sport Complex, Vinton Bowling Center, and Colonial Downs Off Track Betting to Hardy Road. Residents living in apartments located on the northwest corner of this intersection use Vinyard Road to connect them to nearby commercial establishments, as well as amenities such as the Valley Metro bus

stop located in the parking lot of the Lake Drive Plaza.

- **Hardy Road and Niagara Road** – this intersection is signalized and located adjacent to numerous fast food establishments such as a Kentucky Fried Chicken, Long John Silver's, and Burger King. The commercial nature of this intersection, coupled with heavy traffic volumes, indicate the need for crosswalks to enhance the safety of pedestrians utilizing this intersection.
- **Hardy Road and Clearview Drive** - Sidewalks are located along both sides of Hardy Road at the intersection of Clearview Drive, however, there are no crosswalks present at this signalized intersection.

Staff noticed a few intersections along the study corridors that have pedestrian signalization installed on the traffic poles; however the signalization is not in use. One example is the intersection of Washington Avenue and Bypass Road. Other areas such as the intersection of Washington Avenue and South Pollard Street have curb corners designed with handicapped accessibility, but there are no crosswalks striped across the intersection.

8.5.3 Sidewalks

The existing sidewalks located along portions of the study corridors are discontinuous and inefficient. The sidewalk network should be expanded to fill in gaps and connect to existing and proposed greenways. Additional pedestrian facilities should be installed to increase the safety and efficiency of pedestrian accommodations. It is recommended that consideration be given to requiring new or improved sidewalk installation during the rezoning, special use, or site review process for new development or redevelopment opportunities along the study corridors.

There are numerous areas along the study corridors where dirt paths are visible along the edge of the roadway indicating concentrated pedestrian activity between commercial centers, public buildings and Downtown areas where sidewalk installation should be of higher priority. Examples of where these paths are visible are along Walnut Avenue near the City of Roanoke, in front of the William Byrd Middle and High Schools along Washington Avenue, and portions of Virginia Avenue and Hardy Road mostly between South Pollard Street and the intersection of Bypass Road and Hardy Road.

The existing sidewalk network in the Town of Vinton should be extended into Roanoke County along Hardy Road connecting the Wolf Creek Greenway, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Vinton Business Center where trails are proposed in the Master Plan (see Appendix A). The installation of both sidewalks and bicycle lanes should be supported by Roanoke County with the proposed widening of Hardy Road, formerly identified on VDOT's Six-Year Improvement Plan.

To enhance pedestrian activity between Virginia Avenue and Downtown Vinton, spot improvements should be considered for existing sidewalks located along the southern portion of South Pollard Street between Cleveland and Virginia Avenues. According to the RVARC's sidewalk inventory, this was the only section of sidewalk along the study corridors receiving a "Grade C" condition.

All sidewalks should be constructed using standard width as recommended by the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) or local guidelines. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines should be followed when constructing curb ramps and pedestrian crossings.



Image 8.5.3 Sidewalk installation at the corner of Virginia Avenue and 3rd Street.

8.5.4 Landscaping

Roadways with landscaped medians and street trees provide significant aesthetic and environmental benefits within a community. Landscaped medians provide areas for community identification or gateway entrance signs. Street trees provide shade for pedestrians by being planted either between the curb and edge of sidewalk or behind the sidewalk.

Many localities are adopting long-range Tree Action Plans to conserve and manage tree resources. Plan goals are developed which commit to conserving current tree assets and increase the effectiveness of urban forestry with planning and policymaking. Energy conservation is practiced through tree canopy program which shade homes, saving owners 20-25% in energy costs.

Increasing the tree canopy coverage improves water quality by reducing water quantity in urban areas within a community and reducing surface runoff. Other benefits include improved wildlife habitats, improved air quality, increased property values, improved screening and privacy, and reductions in the impacts of lights, wind and noise. For a map of specific streetscape needs along the study corridors, refer to the conceptual drawing in Appendix B.

8.5.5 Pedestrian Lighting

To improve safety along the study corridors, pedestrian lighting should be installed in conjunction with pedestrian improvements. The light poles can also be designed to hang planter baskets and display banners.

8.5.6 Underground Utilities

Underground utilities were ranked as the top response in streetscape features desired by citizens. Utility poles are typically located within the right-of-way, creating conflict with proposed sidewalks and landscaping.

8.5.7 Other Amenities

Other types of streetscape amenities such as trash receptacles, decorative benches, bicycle racks, attractive railings and planter boxes should also be considered along the study corridors.

8.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

For Vinton to continue to prosper, opportunities for development, redevelopment and infill must be carefully evaluated. Throughout the development of this plan, economic development representatives from Roanoke County and the Town of Vinton were consulted on matters regarding land use and economic development. The following funding sources, issues, recommendations, and plans of action have been identified to retain viable businesses and attract new growth.

8.6.1 Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program

As the Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program is currently structured, business and/or property owners along Hardy Road and Washington Avenue are not eligible for this program. To improve participation in this program, enhance aesthetics, and provide incentives for development and redevelopment, the boundaries of this program should be expanded to the portions of the these gateway entrance corridors that lie in East Roanoke County and the Town of Vinton.

As outlined in the Hollins Area Plan, a component of the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan adopted in November 2008, the following Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program amendments should also be considered for the Plan:

1. Retain an architecture firm to respond to inquiries from business owners to design three options for the owner to choose from;
2. Initiate an application fee that would help cover the architectural design fee,
3. Provide templates for monument sign and landscaping design,
4. Create incentives through Economic Development for use of green building and Low Impact Design techniques,
5. Evaluate tax incentives, coordinated through Economic Development and the Roanoke County Commissioner of Revenue, to encourage program participation,
6. Determine tiered levels of funding or matching grant percentage dependent upon:
 - a. Type of Project
 - i. Façade renovations would qualify for \$50,000
 - ii. Monument signs would qualify for \$20,000
 - iii. Landscaping would qualify for \$15,000
 - b. Percentage of Compliance
 - i. 33% matching grant funds if project is below minimum Zoning Ordinance requirements

- ii. 50% matching grant funds if project meets Zoning Ordinance requirements
- iii. 66% matching grant funds if project exceeds Zoning Ordinance requirements

8.6.2 Downtown Façade Program

To improve the participation in the Downtown Façade Program and enhance the appearance of Downtown Vinton, the program should be reviewed for its effectiveness. To encourage use of the program, at a minimum, the following amendments should be considered:

- Expand program boundaries to coordinate with the Downtown Revitalization area, as determined in the DHCD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG),
- Evaluate the program for inclusion of interior renovations and alleyway,
- Development of façade design and sign standards to promote uniformity among specialty merchants area,
- Increase levels of funding or matching grant percentages, and
- Evaluate tax incentives, coordinated through Economic Development and the Roanoke County Commissioner of Revenue.

For conceptual renderings provided by Edward Mazeika, a property owner in Downtown Vinton, please refer to Appendix B.

8.6.3 Virginia Main Street Program

The Town of Vinton should evaluate the designation criteria for becoming a Virginia Main Street Community. If eligible, the Town should apply for full designation as a Virginia Main Street Community. If ineligible, the Town should consider taking the appropriate measures to meet the requirements for full Main Street designation. Additionally, as referenced in the Town of Vinton's Comprehensive Plan, a full time economic development coordinator should be hired who can serve as the downtown "Main Street" coordinator.

8.6.4 Economic Opportunity Areas

As identified in the 2005 Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan, Roanoke County should consider expanding the economic opportunity areas to provide

continuity along Washington Avenue and Hardy Road. The expansion of these areas should be evaluated in conjunction with the proposed Future Land Use amendments set forth in this plan. The County should encourage development and redevelopment in these economic opportunity areas that are served with public utilities.

8.6.5 Vinton Business Center

The Town of Vinton and Roanoke County should focus marketing efforts on the Vinton Business Center to attract compatible commercial, light industrial and office uses to this site to increase the tax base, expand employment opportunities, and support the development of this publicly owned business park. To increase marketing and promote visibility of the Vinton Business Center, a monument sign should be constructed at the entrance along Hardy Road. A rendering of the sign that has been selected can be found in Appendix B.



Image 8.6.5 The entrance to the Vinton Business Center needs an identification sign along Hardy Road.

To ensure economic feasibility of the Vinton Business Center, the County and Town should consider re-evaluating the various land uses proposed in the Master Plan. Any amendments should complement the character of the surrounding community. Protective and restrictive covenants should be carefully reviewed, so that future development will not compromise quality measures such as retention of natural vegetation, site and building design criteria, open space conservation, incorporation of recreational amenities and viewshed protections.

8.6.6 Downtown Revitalization

In collaboration with DHCD, the Town of Vinton, with the support and assistance of Roanoke County, should

continue efforts to implement the revitalization of Downtown Vinton using CDBG monies.

The revitalization of Downtown Vinton should focus on traditional town center principles of promoting mixed land uses to encourage economic and social diversity:

- Encouraging pedestrian activity with sidewalks and crosswalks;
- Making use of on-street parking as opposed to parking lots,
- Gaining value from unused space by creating public spaces where people can gather;
- Constructing smaller scale buildings closer to the street; and
- Enhancing public transit opportunities.

8.6.7 Vinton Ford Motor Company Property

In 2009, the Virginia Department of Housing and Development Authority (VHDA) awarded the Town of Vinton a \$10,000 planning grant in order to conduct a Mixed use/Mixed Income Feasibility Study of the former Vinton Ford Motor Company site. Wiley|Wilson of Lynchburg, in conjunction with Hill Studios of Roanoke, conducted the study, providing the Town with three development and redevelopment options for the site. The results of the study were presented to the Vinton Town Council in December 2009.



Image 8.6.7 The Vinton Ford Motors properties are a significant redevelopment opportunity near the heart of Downtown Vinton.

8.6.8 New Town Centers

The River Park Shopping Center is located in a prime area for development of a planned commercial town center. The site is ideally located between three major arterials serving the Town of Vinton and East Roanoke County - Bypass Road, Hardy Road and Washington Avenue. The Town of Vinton's 2004 *Economic and Community Development Plan* recommends strategies that the Town should undertake to assist in a public-private venture. These recommendations include:

- Formation of a development corporation composed of key property owners, businesses, and the Town that would serve as the driving force for assembling land and gaining commitments of prospective businesses;
- Development of a preliminary conceptual design for the New Town Center;
- Development of a recreational area behind the New Town Center connecting the Center with a pedestrian link to downtown through Jefferson Park; and
- Identifying support infrastructure needs to help generate the private investment.

Other opportunities for development of planned commercial centers are the East Vinton Plaza and Lake Drive Plaza shopping centers.



Image 8.6.8 Vacant parcel adjacent to River Park Shopping Center along Bypass Road.

8.6.9 Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The Town of Vinton strives to remain proactive and aggressive in planning for future water and sewer needs in the community. In order to ensure that development and

redevelopment opportunities are viable, the Town of Vinton must address several concerns regarding placement of fire hydrants and improvements to water lines. In 2008, the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to Chapter 9 “Fire Prevention and Protection” of the Roanoke County Code implementing fire hydrant placement and flow standards. At the time of the 2008 amendment to the Roanoke County Code, the Town of Vinton had adopted the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code and appointed the Roanoke County Fire Marshal as the designated fire official for enforcement within the Town limits.

The current capacity and conditions of water within the Town of Vinton will not support future development and redevelopment. The older and smaller water lines will not support required quantity and flow of water to support the fire hydrants in or adjacent to proposed development. *Anderson and Associates* currently performs as the Town’s general services engineer consultant analyzing the capacity and conditions of water and sewer facilities. The Town of Vinton will have to address the issues with the capacity limits of existing infrastructure to spur economic development within the Town limits.

8.7 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

8.7.1 Adopt-A-Highway Program

In 1988, VDOT launched the Adopt-A-Highway program. This program allows volunteer groups and individuals to improve the aesthetics in their community. Volunteers agree to a two-year commitment of “adopting” a two mile or more stretch of roadway and picking up trash at least four times each year. This program promotes volunteerism, encourages social interaction and establishes a foundation for environmental awareness in a community.

Volunteers earn recognition for their efforts by the Adopt-A-Highway signs placed along the roadway. VDOT provides the safety vests, trash bags and information needed to ensure that trash is picked up safely along the roadway. Numerous comments about trash and debris accumulation along Hardy Road were voiced by citizens participating in the Vinton Area Corridors Plan Community survey. This program can help mitigate those issues and reclaim a sense of community pride.

8.7.2 Adopt-A-Spot Programs

The Adopt-A-Spot Program was originally created as a supplement to the Adopt-A-Highway Program by the State Recycling and Litter Prevention office. This locally administered program encourages citizen participation in beautifying specific areas within communities such as medians, parks, parking lots and vacant lots that are not covered in the Adopt-A-Highway Program. Similar to the Adopt-A-Highway Program, organizations and individuals receive public recognition for their efforts through the display of a sign. To encourage healthy landscaping, promote citizen participation, and enhance the visual appearance along the study corridors, the Town of Vinton should evaluate the positive impacts of an Adopt-A-Spot Program by identifying potential locations, evaluating safety and other regulations, and developing local sponsorship guidelines. In many urban localities, the Public Works Department administers the program.

8.7.3 The Comprehensive Roadside Management Program

The Comprehensive Roadside Management Program is administered by VDOT. This program enables private businesses, civic organizations, communities, individuals and local governments an opportunity to improve the appearance and safety of the state maintained right-of-way by participating in project development, establishment, and maintenance of landscaping activities within the state maintained right-of-way. The Town of Vinton and Roanoke County should encourage participation and sponsorship in this program.

8.8 TRANSPORTATION

8.8.1 Access Management

To provide interconnectivity between land use and transportation planning, access control measures need to be applied to future development and redevelopment along the Vinton study corridors. The number of existing access points reduces the functionality of the corridors. Access management principles such as shared parking lots, reducing the number of driveways and entrance points, utilizing parallel roads and retrofitting existing residential streets are all measures that should be incorporated into local plans and ordinances.

8.8.2 William Byrd Traffic Impact Analysis

In accordance with the *FY 2010-2015 Priority List of Revenue Sharing Projects*, the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors have submitted an application that the extension of the existing turn lane on eastbound Washington Avenue (Route 24) at the entrance to William Byrd Middle and High Schools be included in the Revenue Sharing Program. If funding for this project is approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, construction will be carried out in the 2010 construction season by VDOT.

8.8.3 Six-Year Improvement Plan Projects

The Town of Vinton and VDOT should continue efforts to re-scope the Walnut Avenue Six-Year Road Improvement Project. Owing to major reductions in state transportation funding, the Walnut Avenue Corridor Improvement Project will be accomplished as a series of smaller projects with connectivity. At the time of this planning effort, the exact project scopes are still being finalized by VDOT.

The County of Roanoke should consider returning the reconstruction and widening of Hardy Road (Route 634) to the Six-Year Improvement Plan when sufficient funds are available. Input from Bedford County and the Blue Ridge Parkway should be sought during the scoping and/or preliminary engineering of this project, as their current infrastructure only accommodates two lanes.

The *Bikeway Plan for the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization*, completed in August 2005, designates Hardy Road as a Priority Corridor for Bicycle Accommodations in Roanoke County. As the Town of Vinton has made improvements along Hardy Road from Bypass Road to the eastern limits of Vinton that include widening from two to four lanes and adding sidewalks and bicycle lanes, it is appropriate for Roanoke County to evaluate and advocate the inclusion of bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks & greenways connections) with the planned Six-Year Plan road improvements.

In accordance with the Vinton Business Center Master Plan, this project should include the realignment of Feather Road and the future extension of Cardinal Park Drive, as they intersect with Hardy Road. The proposed recreational trails in the Vinton Business Center, the proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the existing connection to the Wolf Creek Greenway, all contribute

to the high prioritization of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along Hardy Road. The improvements should ensure that future road conditions are appropriate for the various commercial and light industrial land uses targeted in the Vinton Business Center Master Plan.

8.8.4 Realignment of South Pollard Street

As identified in the Town of Vinton's 2004 *Economic and Community Development Plan*, the intersection of South Pollard Street and Virginia Avenue should be redesigned to improve visibility. Circulation into Downtown Vinton could also be improved by realigning South Pollard Street and enhancing the intersection with lighting and open space.

8.8.5 Parking on South Pollard Street

The results of the Community Survey indicate that congestion and delays are the predominant inconveniences experienced by motorists traveling along South Pollard Street. Contributing factors to these inconveniences include on-street parking, parking enforcement, left turns onto West Lee Street from northbound motorists, and the location of the post office. To alleviate the congestion and delays along South Pollard Street, the Town should consider limiting parking to one side of the street, or prohibiting on-street parking altogether. This would require that alternative parking areas be determined for merchants and residents living in Downtown Vinton.

8.8.6 Turning Radius on Virginia Avenue

The turning radius at the intersection of 3rd Street and Virginia Avenue is not sufficient for the truck traffic leaving and entering this industrial area, specifically PFG.

8.8.7 Speed Limit Changes

As of September 28, 2009, the speed limit on the segment of Walnut Avenue from Third Street to the City of Roanoke line was reduced from 35 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour in both the east bound and west bound directions (see Appendix B). The Town of Vinton made this change as a public safety measure because the travel lane width, shoulders, clearances, and access points along this roadway are not designed for a 35 miles per hour speed limit. The speed limit reduction was reviewed by the Town's Highway Safety Commission who supported the proposal. The Vinton Town Council endorsed the Commission's recommendation. Additionally,

consultation with engineers from the Virginia Department of Transportation confirmed that 25 miles per hour is the appropriate speed for this segment of Walnut Avenue.

As development and redevelopment occurs in Vinton and Eastern Roanoke County, speed limits along the remaining study corridors should be evaluated. Infrastructure improvements such as bicycle lanes and sidewalks may also facilitate the need for speed limit adjustments.

8.8.8 CORTAN

The preliminary results of the Roanoke County 2009 Fiscal Year End Report indicate increased usage in the CORTAN program. The increased usage led to unanticipated expenditures in public transportation funding during the 2009 fiscal year. Although it is difficult to forecast usage rates, additional funding was allocated for public transportation services in the 2010 fiscal year budget. As a result of the increased usage and recent budget implications, staff from Roanoke County and CORTAN are working together to determine a more efficient means of monitoring participation in the CORTAN program by performing trend analyses.

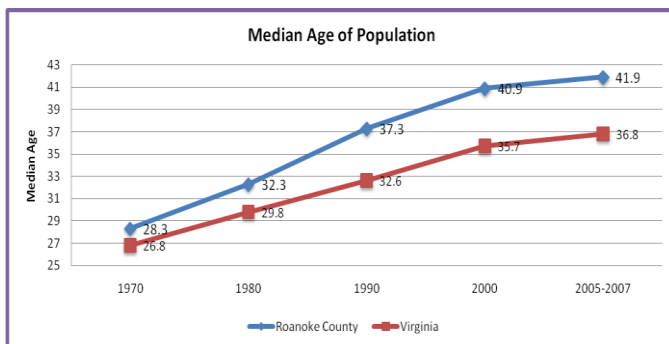


Figure 8.8.8 The aging population in Roanoke County suggests the need to evaluate current public transportation services.

Source: Roanoke County Statistical Abstract

According to data compiled in the Roanoke County Statistical Abstract, the increase usage of the CORTAN program may partially be attributed to the aging population in Roanoke County. For purposes of this analysis, it is important to note that these population statistics are derived from the 2000 U.S. Census data which includes the Town of Vinton. As shown in Figure 8.8.8, the median age of the Roanoke County population is higher than the state average. While this graph shows a population trend in Roanoke County that is similar to the state of Virginia from 1970 to 2000, the median age of

the population in Roanoke County has increased at a faster rate than the state. When compared to the state of Virginia as a whole, the numbers from the 2007 American Community Survey indicate that the rate of increase in the median age of residents in Roanoke County has slowed.

8.8.9 Valley Metro

The County should evaluate the need to extend the current Valley Metro bus routes serving the Town of Vinton to Eastern Roanoke County. Extending the bus routes along Washington Avenue (Route 24) in Roanoke County would ensure access to commercial centers, increase ridership, provide an alternative mode of transportation for the aging population and link Eastern Roanoke County into the Valley's aspiring multi-modal transportation network.

8.9 COMMUNITY FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

8.9.1 The Vinton Library

The Vinton Public Library is outdated and needs to be assessed for expansion, relocation or renovation to meet the growing needs of the Vinton community. Among the comments received from citizens regarding physical improvements and services needed, the following comments were received from citizens: the need for additional parking, installation of bicycle racks outside the facility, improvements to pedestrian access across Washington Avenue, more community meeting space and installation of a drop-off box. Comments regarding aesthetics included sprucing up the building by trimming trees, adding landscaping, updating the monument sign and taking measures to make the building more noticeable.

8.9.2 The Vinton Post Office

Access to and from the Vinton Post Office can be very difficult and dangerous at peak times during the weekday. An alternative location for the post office should be considered in Downtown Vinton, or parking and access should be addressed at its current location.

8.9.3 The Vinton Farmer's Market

The Vinton Farmer's Market has a significant presence in the community and serves as a gathering spot for residents

and tourists to sell and purchase local goods. Several comments were received from citizens about the need to renovate this facility to make it available for year-round use.

8.9.4 Old William Byrd High School

The Town of Vinton's 2004 *Economic and Community Development Plan* recommends converting this facility into an assisted living facility or elderly housing.



Image 8.9.4 A suitable land use needs to be determined for the Old William Byrd High School.

8.9.5 Greenways

Enhancements are needed along Hardy Road (Route 634) at the entrance to the Wolf Creek Greenway. The existing signage could be improved to clearly distinguish the entrance to the greenway, as well as by adding more vibrant landscaping. The proposed widening of Hardy Road should incorporate a greenway connection across Hardy Road connecting the Wolf Creek Greenway to the trails proposed in the Vinton Business Center Master Plan and potentially to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Many citizens indicated a desire to provide a connection between the Wolf Creek and Tinker Creek Greenways.

8.10 FUNDING SOURCES

8.10.1 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

According to VDOT, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was signed into law by President Obama on Feb.17, 2009. Virginia will receive a total of \$694.5 million in highway funding from ARRA to invest in improving our transportation system.

The priorities of this act are to address deficient pavements, structurally deficient bridges and much-needed highway capacity and rail improvements to improve the economic competitiveness of the commonwealth and offer safe, reliable transportation options for all Virginians.

In May 2009, the Commonwealth of Virginia's Office of the Secretary of Transportation announced that \$2.0 million of transportation enhancement funding was awarded for the Roanoke River Greenway. The tourism and economic development potential of this major regional trail project made it a strong candidate for funding. The Roanoke River Greenway is a 31 mile bicycle and pedestrian trail that links the cities of Roanoke and Salem, Roanoke County, and the Town of Vinton. Once completed, the greenway will provide linkages to neighborhoods, industrial facilities, business centers, parks, schools, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Additionally, this greenway will make future trail connections available with Montgomery and Franklin Counties.

The first segment of the greenway that the transportation enhancement funding will focus on is connecting the Roanoke River Greenway to the Tinker Creek Greenway at the Western Virginia Water Authority's wastewater treatments plant in Southeast Roanoke. The second segment is the portion of the Roanoke River Greenway up to the Roanoke County line. The projected cost of these two portions of the greenway is \$1,400,000.

8.10.2 Capital Improvements Program

The Town of Vinton and Roanoke County should incorporate the recommendations found in this document, including economic development initiatives and transportation improvements into the annual capital improvement budgets. These funds would leverage federal and state financial assistance.

8.10.3 Department of Historic Resources (DHR)

The Department of Historic Resources encourages regional economic competitiveness by offering funding to Certified Local Governments in the form of grants for a variety of uses including surveys of architectural resources and preparation of National Register of Historic Places nominations for heritage resources. Grant funding from DHR may also be used to train and educate Architecture

Review Boards and aide in the development of programs and materials to assist the Board in carrying out its daily functions. The rehabilitation of publicly owned buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and public education programs concerned with local resources and any of the board benefits associated with heritage stewardship program are grant eligible. The Town and County should encourage use of historic tax credits to reduce renovation costs for eligible properties.

8.10.4 Economic Development Authority (EDA)

Throughout the United States, Economic/Industrial Development Authorities assist new and expanding businesses in securing tax-exempt industrial development revenue bonds. These bonds provide as much as 100% financing at interest rates that are much lower than those available from other sources. For the past 15 years, federal regulations have restricted the use of these bonds to financing of manufacturing facilities. Bonds are issued when financing these facilities, covering the cost of land, buildings, machinery or equipment. A mortgage or lien on the financed property is then secured and repaid from the revenue of the project. Seven directors appointed by the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors govern the Economic Development Authority of Roanoke County, created in 1971. It is authorized to acquire, own, lease and dispose of local properties that will potentially promote industry and develop trade in Virginia.

8.10.5 Public/Private Partnerships (PPP)

Opportunities for additional economic development funding may be available from soliciting corporate sponsorships from commercial and industrial businesses in the Town of Vinton and Eastern Roanoke County. Creating a special tax district for commercial and industrial properties to generate funding for study corridor improvements that will benefit business owners is also a funding opportunity.

8.10.6 Revenue Sharing

The VDOT Revenue Sharing Program provides Roanoke County with an annual opportunity to receive State matching funds for the construction, maintenance, and improvements to primary and secondary roads in the State's highway system. VDOT and County staff review and evaluate each request received for inclusion in the Revenue Sharing Program. An application for Revenue

Sharing Program funding must be made by resolution of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors. Project funding is allocated by resolution of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Construction may be performed by VDOT, or where appropriate, by Roanoke County under an agreement with VDOT. The maximum state participation amount is \$1 million per locality. The Revenue Sharing Projects in Roanoke County receive \$500,000 in County funds and \$500,000 in State Matching funds.

8.10.7 Six-Year Improvement Plan

The Six-Year Improvement Program allocates funds for transportation projects proposed for construction, development or study in the next six fiscal years. The program is updated annually and is categorized into urban, primary and secondary systems projects.

8.10.8 Safe Routes to Schools Program

The Safe Routes to Schools Program (SRTS), launched in September 2006 by Governor Timothy M. Kaine, encourages primary and secondary age children to safely walk and bicycle to school. This program teaches school-age children bicycle and pedestrian safety, promotes healthy and active lifestyles, and funds projects that improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. The SRTS is a federally-funded program that is administered in the Commonwealth of Virginia by VDOT. It was created through the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU Act).

The SRTS program is designed to facilitate partnerships among schools, parents, students, local governments, community groups and non-profit organizations in communities across the nation. This is a phased program that is divided into infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. The first phase of the program requires approval of a School Travel Plan. Once this Plan is approved, applicants may apply for implementation funding. The funding limit for infrastructure projects is \$500,000 per locality. The funding limit for non-infrastructure projects is \$50,000 per application. The SRTS program provides 100% of the funding so a match is not required. Program guidelines do indicate that applicants are encouraged to leverage funding from other sources.

In 2008, Roanoke County Public Schools were award recipients for SRTS program implementation and bicycle education at William Byrd Middle School.

8.10.9 Virginia Department of Business Assistance (VDBA)

The VDBA is a resource for helping entrepreneurs get their small businesses started and off the ground. As the businesses become established, the VDBA helps them continue to grow over the years. The agency would provide access to problem solving, workforce training, and other such amenities for local business within the Town of Vinton and east Roanoke County.

The Virginia Small Business Development Center Network (VSBDC) is an additional resource for providing information and services such as economic and business data, a resource library, site location analysis, marketing assistance, and specialized training workshops.

8.10.10 Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

The Virginia Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides funding to eligible units of local government through a competitive grant process to address community development needs including housing, downtown revitalization and infrastructure. Funding is available to DHCD by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In the spring of each year, Community Improvement Grant (CIG) applications are due to DHCD for funding consideration for specific projects. The Town of Vinton has successfully obtained CDBG funding for a planning grant for Downtown Revitalization. A Community Improvement Grant application is the next step to formally applying for capital funding for the downtown revitalization projects.

8.10.11 Other Economic Development Programs

Entrepreneur Training and MicroEnterprise Loan Program

An Entrepreneur Training and MicroEnterprise Loan Program is offered through THIS VALLEY WORKS and Total Action Against Poverty (TAP). This program lasts five sessions and includes business start-up, management, marketing, planning and finances. The five sessions are available for a \$12 registration fee per business. Program

participants will receive technical assistance in developing business plans and financial projections. Start-up or expansion loans of up to \$35,000 may be available for qualifying micro-businesses.

Eligible businesses must be located in the RVARC area (Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, and Roanoke counties and the cities of Clifton Forge, Covington, Roanoke, and Salem) and business owners must qualify as low to moderate income, or 51% of the employees must qualify as such. Mentoring will also be provided through the start-up or expansion. Those planning childcare facilities will have specific training sessions.

New Markets Tax Credits Program

The Virginia Small Business Financing Authority's (VSBFA) New Markets Tax Credits Program is designed to help existing businesses fund the purchase of real estate occupied by their companies and/or capital equipment used in their operation. The VSBFA serves as the conduit through which the Community Reinvestment Fund makes New Markets Tax Credits loans available.

Providing Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (P.A.C.E.)

The P.A.C.E. Program provides access to capital for disadvantaged Virginia businesses by encouraging banks to make loans that they would otherwise not make due to a borrower's risk profile. The program is administered by the VSBFA for the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE). The P.A.C.E. program provides two financing mechanisms, the Capital Access Fund for Disadvantaged Businesses and the Loan Guaranty Fund for Disadvantaged Businesses.

Small Business Environmental Compliance Assistance Fund

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Virginia Department of Business Assistance (DBA) to develop and administer a revolving loan program. Through this program, low-interest rate loans are available to small businesses for the purchase and installation of replacement equipment needed to comply with the Clean Air Act; or to implement voluntary pollution prevention measures; or for the implementation of selected voluntary agricultural best management (BMPs) practices as listed in the Virginia Agricultural BMP Manual.

Taxable Industrial Development Bond (IDB) Program

Economic development financing is available for the acquisition, construction and equipping of commercial and industrial facilities. Through the public taxable bond market, the VSBFA supplies financing to Virginia businesses. Taxable bonds, exempt from Virginia state income tax, provide long-term, fixed asset financing. The applicant must own, manage, or occupy the facility being financed and be providing goods or services.

completed within the years allocated in one timeframe, while others cross timeframes.

Virginia Community Reinvestment Program

The VSBFA's Community Reinvestment Program is designed to help existing businesses fund the purchase of owner occupied real estate and/or capital equipment. The VSBFA serves as the conduit through which the Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF – a Minnesota based 501 c3) makes loans in economically disadvantaged areas, to disadvantaged business owners, or in situations that create economic benefit or important public impact as determined by the VSBFA and CRF. The assets financed will be pledged as collateral for these loans.

Virginia Economic Development Loan Fund (VEDLF)

For businesses creating new jobs or saving "at risk" jobs in Virginia, a program was set up to fill the financing gap between private lending and private equity. VEDLF can only contribute up to 40% of the project cost and the company must provide a minimum of 10% as cash equity, the maximum loan amount is \$1,000,000, and one permanent, full-time job must be created or saved for each \$20,000 borrowed. Companies manufacturing or exporting goods may receive the loan and the funds can be used for land and buildings, expansion or improvement of facilities, construction of new facilities, or to purchase machinery and equipment. This loan cannot be used for working capital.

8.11 SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A scheduled of implementation strategies for the Plan is provided in Appendix B. The strategies are grouped by topic, responsible party, and timeframes. The timeframes are Tier 1 (0-5 years), Tier 2 (6-10 years) and Tier 3 (10+ years). Some strategies are planned to be